



Attachment #8 Meeting Minutes

- **Citizens
Advisory
Committee
Meeting Minutes**

- **Concept Team
Meeting Minutes**



JOHNSON FERRY/ABERNATHY ROAD
CAC MEETING MINUTES
MAY 14, 2002
CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Attendance:

Joe Palladi, GDOT, Urban Design	Bill Snarr, Cobb County
Jimmy Chambers- JIG, Transportation	Steve Modellmog, Perimeter CID (Fulton/Dekalb)
Jerrie Woodward, Abernathy HOA	Darrell Richardson, GDOT Urban Design
Gar Muse, Sandy Springs Revitalization	Jan Hilliard, GDOT, Urban Design
Mel Mobley, Sandy Springs Revitalization	Konswello Aikens-Monroe, GDOT, Communications
Rob Simms, Fulton County (Office of Mike Kenn)	Barbara Prebble, Sandy Springs Revitalization
Angela Parker, Fulton County Public Works	Albert "Butch" Welch, GDOT, Urban Design
Lynn Watson, Abernathy Road Coalition	Richard Williams, GDOT, Office of Environmental/Location
Ed Dolan, Abernathy Road Coalition	Roger Blichfeldt, Sandy Springs Revitalization
Tom Kelly, Abernathy Road Coalition	George Britton-Smith, Sandy Springs Council of Neighborhoods
Ralph Daniels, Fulton County (Office of Tom Lowe)	Angela Alexander, GDOT, Urban Design
David Hong, Cobb County (Commissioner Sam Olen)	Jennifer Giersch, Federal Highway Administration
George Smith, Sandy Springs Council of Neighborhoods	Greg Ramsey, JIG
Tom Williams, Mountain Springs/Rivershore Estates	Brandi Alvarez, JIG
Rod Gary, Perimeter CID	Jeanne Hill, JIG
Kevin G. Cheri, NPS Chattahoochee River NRA	

APPROVED: JUNE 25, 2002

Joe Palladi (GDOT) welcomed the CAC members. He gave an overview of the project and talked about the whole process regarding the options for Johnson Ferry and Abernathy Roads. The CAC will be a conduit to provide information for the planning process and to provide feedback from their communities, both business and residential.

- Mr. Palladi set the CAC ground rules as follows:
 1. Respect the Speaker.
 2. No Side Bars – share all communications with the group.
 3. Be on time to each meeting.
 4. CAC will be charged with **recommending a preferred alternative**. The minutes will be taken at each meeting; the draft minutes will be sent out within ten days of the meeting for corrections/red lines, and final minutes will be approved at the next CAC meeting.
 5. The CAC is charged with community networking with both businesses and residents to ensure an accurate flow of information, sharing “What If’s”, Whys? Etc.
 6. The CAC will consider all transportation opportunities at this time, taking both pedestrians, cyclists, transit and traffic flow into account.
- A Web site regarding the project will be online soon. This www site will include approved minutes, schedules, maps and other pertinent information. (If you would like to link your site with this one, please contact Ms. Alvarez at 678-333-0450 or Balvarez@jjg.com).

Other statements by Mr. Palladi:

- If the GDOT has inaccurate history regarding the planning area, the GDOT should be made aware of these inaccuracies.
- GDOT Engineers look at the “nuts and bolts,” sometimes neighborhood elements (parks, schools, homes) conflict with the engineering process, therefore the conflicts or problems need to be solved by making decisions – Decisions that the CAC will help to evaluate and recommend solutions for.
- Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). Projects in the TIP are drawn from the RTP.
- This process is an “Open Process” – the GDOT will meet with groups (i.e., smaller neighborhood groups, homeowners associations (HOA) etc.) in order to communicate with the residents and businesses in the planning area. Joe Palladi’s direct number at GDOT is 404-656-5446 and email is: joe.palladi@dot.state.ga.us
- There are other GDOT projects and proposed developments that will be looked at and considered in the planning of this area, such as: (GA 400, HOV improvements ...)
- The community’s wants and needs will be considered.
- Successful design is to meet the desired level of service - reducing congestion.
- The Johnson Ferry/Abernathy project is in the current TIP. Congressman Johnny Isakson has also designated this project as priority.

- The traffic model is flexible. It will look at "What ifs?," levels of service, intersections, turning movements, signalization etc.
- The three (3) stages: Concept, Environmental and Public Involvement are not linear; these stages will be embraced together in one process, which will guide the CAC recommendations as to project scope.
- Two (2) dimensional mapping will be utilized, as well as three dimensional (3-D) cross section or slices to aid CAC concept planning.
- Two (2) funding sources will be used: Federal and State. There may be GRTA (Georgia Regional Transportation Authority) funds available as well. GRTA funds may be used for additional ROW, which the DOT cannot obtain. GRTA may also have money for green space (Bonds).
- Displaced residents: the GDOT will provide a timeframe if necessary. GDOT would like to see construction of both Johnson Ferry and Abernathy to coincide to minimize inconvenience to area residents and businesses.
- GDOT would like to move as quick as possible, leaving no stone unturned, mapping out a schedule and address all critical issues in a timely fashion.
- GDOT is looking at both traditional and non-traditional ideas for corridor.

Mr. Jimmy Chambers (JJG) made the following statements:

- A brief description of the Plan Development Process: Mr. Chambers reviewed the handouts found in the CAC packets and reiterated that the CAC role is needed from concept development through the construction phase.
- Johnson Ferry Road and Abernathy Road have been temporarily placed on the State Highway System as S.R. 947. This will allow GDOT to acquire right of way for the project.
- This is new/fresh look at the project area. There are new elements (subdivisions etc.) in the area, all of which need to be considered.
- Federal aid – a long, detailed process needs to be followed in order to qualify for Federal monies for this project. (See Mr. Chambers if you have specific questions regarding Federal aid or the process.)
- Johnson Ferry/Abernathy Roads have been in the planning process for over fifteen years. The Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) has put this project in the RTP and TIP.
- Current status: Concept Development – a critical step requiring public input. The planning and mapping will be facilitated by the current aerial photography.
- A detailed history of this corridor can be obtained from Mr. Chambers. (678-333-0485 or jchambers@jjg.com) and will be posted on the project website.

The Public Involvement Process will consist of the following:

1. Environmental Aspects – a full environmental study of the entire corridor including history, wetlands, endangered species, archeological issues, etc., will be done.
2. Utilities- both above and below ground will be discussed.
3. Analysis of traffic counts, traffic projections, and turning movements of all roads in the area will be discussed.
4. The presentation of the ARC traffic model.

Concept Development and Environmental:

1. RTP is a 25 year plan all projects for the metro regional area, which takes into consideration the Federally mandated air quality standards, as well as operational issues.
2. Will be conducted concurrently.
3. Everything developed during the process will be presented/reported to the CAC.
4. All information will be used in the preparation of the required NEPA document – an Environmental Assessment.
5. Concept Report and draft Environmental Assessment for the end of 2002.
6. Safety is a major issue.

Preliminary Plans:

1. Alignments (horizontal and vertical) – alignments may shift somewhat.
2. Right of Way (ROW) (please note – no ROW can be obtained without an approved Environmental Assessment; an Environmental Assessment is expected).
3. The Plan Development Process (PDP) information is on the GDOT website- <http://www.dot.state.ga.us/>

Brandi Alvarez (Facilitator of Public Involvement, JJG) stated that the CAC two (2) action items for this meeting were:

1. To mark on the maps areas of concern, then discuss these areas and issues and
2. Develop a Mission Statement

The CAC needs to get a feel for where the "hot" spots are, the concerns surrounding these hot spots, and why there are constraints. There are needs and opportunities in the planning corridor, which were looked at during the exercises.

Additional CAC concerns that were discussed:

- The adjoining intersections, such as Roswell Road and Abernathy, Northridge, I-285, as these areas affect the planning process for this project.
- Congestion – hard time getting out of subdivisions. Vehicles coming from East Cobb, going to Sandy Springs to shop, etc. Options?
- Concern about bridge over Chattahoochee River, and effects to the park.
- Safety concerns for pedestrians and cyclists.

- Adequate flow to the corridor – volume and speed issues.
- Lots of accidents at Columns Drive (near park area).
- Collector lanes for subdivision traffic.
- The reverse commute is also contributing to congestion.
- Speed limits (35 and 45 mph in areas) not enforced.
- Mass Transit – middle lane for high buses (i.e. with laptop plug-ins to make them more attractive to potential riders); linked to MARTA, parking will need to be addressed.
- HOV arterial lanes – to be coordinated with GRTA and the two counties (Cobb and Fulton).
- A network of transportation alternatives – multi-modal (cars, bikes, sidewalks, etc.).
- Unified traffic system – create and maintain it throughout corridor (both counties), creating a balance. Timed signals, posted speed limits, good sequence or progression of travel.
- Education of people – what is expected of them (when they get to an intersection etc.).
- Road alignment – curve at Riverside Dr., as well as traffic flow at Riverside.
- Preserve Neighborhoods – limit negative impact to property owners.
- No commercial development along corridor.
- Johnson Ferry and Abernathy intersection should function to discourage cut-through traffic.
- Traffic calming items and sidewalks to be installed for River Valley.
- Signal coordination – especially at Johnson Ferry, Abernathy and Brandon Mill.
- Noise Abatement.
- Access concerns.
- Buffers.
- Linear park design on Abernathy needs to be preserved.
- Regional needs balanced with maintaining the community character.
- Bring corridor up to ADA standards.
- Roswell and Abernathy intersection needs to be looked at in order to bring success to this project.

Mission Statement creation: Ms. Alvarez instructed the CAC to approach the Mission Statement as *"What would be the headline in the newspaper 25 years from now?"*

The CAC comments were as follows:

- Concerned – will our work be obsolete in 25 years?
- Informed decisions, with continued dialog and regional coordination.
- CAC to make sure GDOT has followed through with plan – from concept to completion.

- Regional and Local needs are met (how the process works or worked?).
- Preservation of neighborhoods and neighborhood roads.
- Transportation greenway.
- Plan includes multi-modes.
- Pedestrians, cyclists, and cars are link to amenities (i.e., River and MARTA).
- Construct and build a transportation system.
- Transportation choices without denying needs.
- Design to capacity – in scale with area.
- Communication with residents and property owners in a timely manner as needed.
- Uniform message from CAC, GDOT, Cobb, and Fulton Counties

Other Business

*Next meeting: Tuesday, June 25, 2002, from 8:30 to noon.
Sandy Springs United Methodist Church*

At this meeting, traffic counts, and accident data will be discussed. CAC will look at a typical section. What are the issues, such as utilities, amenities, etc. in order to develop a concept for the corridor. Primary path and milestones will be discussed. The CAC will establish the Mission Statement and look at several alternatives.

⇒CAC Action Items (to be completed prior to June 25, 2002 CAC Meeting):

1. Review and Correction of draft CAC minutes – comments and corrections due to Brandi Alvarez by Wednesday June 12, 2002.
2. Submit any concerns or comments from your constituents, which will or should be addressed at the June meeting, to Brandi Alvarez by Friday, June 21, 2002. Revised CAC minutes and any additional information will be mailed out in the CAC packets June 14, 2002.

Additional comments received:

1. The length of the corridor should be 35 mph.
2. The length of the corridor should 4 traffic lanes.
3. Website: www.johnsonferry-abernathyroad.com

Attendance:

Angela Alexander, GDOT, Urban Design	Bill Snarr, Cobb County
Jimmy Chambers- JIG, Transportation	Steve Modellmog, Perimeter CID (Fulton/Dekalb)
Jerrie Woodward, Abernathy HOA	Konswello Aikens-Monroe, GDOT, Communications
Robert Fishel for Gar Muse, Sandy Springs Revitalization	Mike Tuller, Cobb County (new CAC Member as of June 25, 2002)
Mel Mobley, Sandy Springs Revitalization	Yvonne Williams, Perimeter CID
Angela Parker, Fulton County Public Works	Albert "Butch" Welch, GDOT, Urban Design
Lynn Watson, Abernathy Road Coalition	Richard Williams, GDOT, Office of Environmental/Location
Ed Dolan, Abernathy Road Coalition	Roger Blichfeldt, Sandy Springs Revitalization
Tom Kelly, Abernathy Road Coalition	George Britton-Smith, Sandy Springs Council of Neighborhoods
Ralph Daniels, Fulton County (Office of Tom Lowe)	Jennifer Giersch, Federal Highway Administration
Denis Delehanty for David Hong, Cobb County (Commissioner Sam Olens)	Greg Ramsey, JIG
George Smith, Sandy Springs Council of Neighborhoods	Brandi Alvarez, JIG
Tom Williams, Mountain Springs/Rivershore Estates	Jeanne Hill, JIG
Kevin G. Cheri, NPS Chattahoochee River NRA	Brooke Houston, JIG
Dana Nuccitelli	Tommy Crochet, JIG, Transportation
Douglas Dewberry, Dewberry Capital Corp/ Sandy Springs Business Association	Cheryl Sykes
John Cheek	

Absent CAC Members

Robb Simms, Fulton County	Adam Orkin, Sandy Springs Business Association
Joe Gavalis, Cobb County	Darrell Richardson, GDOT, Urban Design
Rev. Glen Miles, Sandy Springs Christian Church	

Ms. Jeanne Hill (JIG) welcomed the CAC members and guests. After a brief overview of the project, the CAC reviewed the draft minutes from the May 14, 2002 CAC meeting.

Mr. Tom Williams had several comments, which he wanted reflected in the June 25, 2002 Minutes. His comments are as follows:

1. CAC representatives need time to review the issues for accuracy and coordinate with community peers and neighborhood representatives in preparation for the next meeting.

For this reason, meeting minutes should be received by CAC members within ten (10) business days of the meeting.

2. It is common for CAC representatives and others alike to be out of town for one to two weeks at a time for summer vacations and business trips.
3. Under additional CAC concerns (from the May 14, 2002 Minutes... The second bullet ("Congestion - hard time getting...") and the eighth bullet ("The reverse commute...") both imply morning commuter traffic in the context of all the listed concerns. Equal emphasis needs to be added for the evening congestion problem in the direction of traffic heading back to East Cobb and to Sandy Springs neighborhoods along the corridor from Fulton County. Long evening backups on Abernathy Road east of the River Valley Road intersection and on Johnson Ferry Road southeast of the River Valley intersection are common even when there is no backup on the segment of Johnson Ferry between River Valley and the Chattahoochee River because of very poor intersection signalization.
4. The tenth bullet ("Mass Transit - middle lane for high buses...") needs to address strategic bus stop locations on both sides of the river in addition to parking requirements in a manner appropriate for express service.
5. The twentieth bullet ("Signal coordination...") needs to include River Valley Road.

The CAC then approved the May 14, 2002 minutes and the following members signed the approved minutes: Bill Snarr, Roger Blichfeldt, and Tom Kelly.

Ms. Angela Alexander, GDOT, reviewed two emails concerning CAC issues that were sent to GDOT after the May 14, 2002 meeting. The following are the details of the emails:

1. Cobb County requests that Mr. Mike Tuller be added to the CAC. Cobb County has three current members. The committee requested that the status of Mr. Gavalis' membership be examined. In the meantime, Mr. Tuller was approved as a new CAC member.
2. Tom Kelly's email questioned whether GDOT has given the CAC all appropriate information regarding this project. Ms. Alexander, GDOT, reiterated the fact that this project is a fresh project and that "no decisions" have been made by GDOT. GDOT is looking for recommendations from the CAC before any decisions are made.

2b. Mr. Kelly also questions the possible funding for the linear park – Sandy Springs Parkway. It has been mentioned that GRTA has funding set aside for the Greenway, but GDOT and the CAC have no confirmation. On behalf of the CAC, Ms. Parker was going to investigate the possible GRTA funding. *Since the meeting held on June 25, 2002, it has been determined that a project has been included in the 2003-2005 Draft TIP that allocates \$4,000,000 to the purchase of rights-of-way for a linear park along the corridor. The ARC project number is FN 034C and the description is Abernathy Road [Additional funding for the linear park] from Johnson Ferry to SR 9- Roswell Road. In addition there is right-of-way funding identified for the roadway project under ARC project number FN 034B. As the concept for these projects is further defined, a determination can be made as to whether these funds will be adequate to purchase the necessary rights-of-way. Adjustments may then be requested to funding amounts currently identified in the Draft TIP.*

- The CAC would like GRTA to become more involved with this project. Should someone from GRTA be on the CAC? The CAC would like to invite GRTA to the next CAC meeting to address their on-going concerns regarding the Greenway and its funding. *As the funding issue has been clarified, there may or may not be a need for GRTA to participate in the next CAC meeting. If this is still a desire of the committee, please forward your comment by e-mail to Balvarez@jjg.com.*

* Future emails will be addressed in the same manner, in order for the CAC to have input regarding any emailed concerns.

Regarding the "Needs and Desires" list that was an outcome from the May 14, 2002 CAC Meeting, the CAC wanted **noise abatement, buffers and landscaping** to be moved from "desires" to "needs". (See attached updated "Needs and Desires" list.)

Mission Statement: The draft Mission Statement was reviewed, dissected, augmented and finalized.

The Johnson Ferry/Abernathy Road CAC Mission Statement:

To define and implement a transportation system that incorporates environmentally friendly multi-modal features, promotes safety, creates local and regional connectivity, preserves neighborhoods, and enhances accessibility to the Sandy Springs central business district, neighborhood activities, adjoining business centers, and other community destinations within the corridor.

Mr. Jimmy Chambers (JJG) gave an overview of the **Environmental Processes**. The following is an outline of the various data included in the Environmental Assessment:

- Historic Resources Survey
- Archeological Resources Survey
- Ecological Survey
 - Wetlands
 - Streams/Rivers
 - Federally threatened or endangered species
- Air Quality Assessment
- Noise Impact Assessment
- Community Impact Assessment
- Floodplain Survey
- Environmental Justice

CAC concerns regarding the environmental process are:

1. Notification when it is necessary to enter someone's property to gather environmental of survey data. Mr. Chambers stated that all residents would be notified when work or survey crews would be out gathering data on particular properties.
2. Land disturbance – Mr. Chambers stated at the most, no more than a few shovels of dirt from any one yard should be removed for environmental purposes.

Mr. Chambers outlined the environmental process in the following summary:

- GDOT hold Public Information Meeting (PIM) on design alternatives
- GDOT responds to PIM comments, re-evaluates design alternatives
- Draft Environmental Assessment (EA) is prepared
- GDOT reviews the Draft EA
- Draft EA is revised as necessary
- Draft EA is submitted to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)
- FHWA reviews the Draft EA and transmits comments to GDOT
- Draft EA is revised as necessary
- FHWA approves Draft EA
- GDOT holds Public Hearing (PH)
- GDOT responds to PH comments
- GDOT prepares a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) document
- FONSI is submitted to FHWA

Additional Environmental Procedures

- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (COE) Permit for impacts to wetlands/waters of the United States ("Section 404")
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Coordination

Section 4(f) evaluation if the project impacts or requires property from public parks and recreation facilities, wildlife refuges, National Register eligible or listed historic structures and archeological sites.

Additional CAC environmental concerns that were discussed:

1. The ecological impacts and wetlands.
2. Erosion control – during construction and in general. There are concerns that there will be a negative drainage impact caused by the impending road construction. GDOT is required to study and mitigate any potential erosion damage caused in the project area.
3. Where would the receptors be placed in order to gather the necessary data regarding air quality and noise?

* Additional environmental questions should be emailed to Balvarez@jjg.com. All emails will be discussed at the next CAC meeting.

Mr. Chambers gave an overview of the **Concepts and Alternative Types**. The following items influence the concepts and alternative types:

- A Policy on Geometric Design of Highways and Streets, published by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) or more commonly known as the Green Book, is the basic design guide used by all state DOT'S and many local governments.
- Public Input
- FHWA policies
- GDOT policies and practices
- State and Federal Laws
- Environmental Issues
- Traffic

Mr. Chambers explained in his presentation that roadway functional classification is as follows:

- Roads are classified according to their actual function.
- Two major considerations in classifying roads functionally are mobility and access.
- Arterials provide the greatest mobility and least access.
- Collectors provide a mid-range of mobility and access.
- Local streets provide the greatest access and least mobility.
- Urban/Rural systems are classified separately.
- Classification affects design speed and roadway elements (lane width, shoulder width, and type and width of median).
- Johnson Ferry Road is an Urban Principal Arterial.
- Abernathy Road is an Urban Collector.

Mr. Chambers also described the current traffic volumes; for this project, traffic counts from March-April, 2002 are being used. Traffic counts include daily volumes, highest hourly volumes, number of pedestrians, and percentage of trucks. These traffic volumes are used to determine the base year traffic. The average daily traffic volume on Johnson Ferry is 30,000-40,000 vehicles per day (vpd). The average daily traffic volume on Abernathy is 23,000 vpd. Base year volumes as well as growth rate factors will be used to project the future, 2026-year traffic.

Four potential alternative designs for the intersection of Johnson Ferry and Abernathy Road were shown. The CAC discussed these alternatives.

CAC concerns regarding the concepts and alternative types are:

1. Sidewalks. Will sidewalks be part of the design plan? Yes.
2. Landscaping issues. (The Sandy Spring CAC members will provide the current overlay guidelines for CAC review.)
3. Driveway cuts.

Ms. Brandi Alvarez (JJG) gave a brief overview for this meeting's exercise, **Possible Design Solutions**. Each CAC was given an 11x17 project map and asked to graphically identify possible traffic solutions on the map. Three sets of photo "postcards" were also circulated to get CAC feedback regarding design elements such as landscaping materials, design, hardscapes, gateways, and lighting. Although the CAC felt they needed more information and traffic demand data in order to complete the exercise, the following information was given:

- The issue of the Riverside/Johnson Ferry intersection poses a critical issue for this plan.
- Fulton County residents have a consistent problem getting out of their own driveways.
- Pedestrian downward faced lighting is desired.
- Streetscapes for Sandy Springs community with stamped concrete (following the SSRI guidelines/standards)
- Consideration of the elderly, kids on skates and scooters etc. in order to properly design the sidewalks. (Brick pavers will not work.)
- Improve the intersection at Brandon Mill
- Raised landscaped medians.
- Street furniture (part of the standards of sidewalks).
- CAC would like a copy of the SSRI standards
- What is the normal median? 20 ft grass/concrete.
- CAC members preferred low maintenance landscaping to a grassy median, such as Xeriscaping.
- More attractive noise buffers, less maintenance.

- Possible large planter/barriers in the medians.
- Issues with schools and the areas around them.
- The school districts need to be depicted on the project map and considered during the design process.
- The purpose of the exercise was to illustrate what the CAC perceives as the realignment of the river crossing, the intersection of Johnson Ferry and Riverside and the intersection of Abernathy and Roswell Roads.

Other CAC concerns:

1. Park property - the preserved property would not be turned into roadway.
2. Current data - the CAC would like to see the traffic model run with the current data (provided by the Atlanta Regional Commission), as well as future scenarios.
3. Ms. Woodward asked if the GDOT would be able to meet with the residents along Abernathy road regarding the project, the current status and possible relocation.
4. Alignment of Abernathy Road – whether the roadway widening would be to the north or south, and how it would affect homeowners on both sides of the road. Driveway cuts, front yards, and noise abatement.

Ms. Hill asked the CAC members to return a list of ten most frequently asked questions regarding this project by July 12, 2002 to Brandi Alvarez (balvarez@jjg.com). The top ten of the questions, with answers, will be posted on the project web site - www.johnsonferry-abernathyroad.com.

Other Business

*Next CAC meeting: Tuesday, August 20, 2002, from 8:30 to noon.
Sandy Springs United Methodist Church

At this meeting, the CAC will review alternative designs and alignments. The CAC will select a preferred alternative based on comments. The preferred alternative will be addressed in terms of meeting project goals.

***Since the last meeting, a decision has been made to delay the Public Information Meeting (PIM) until further studies can be completed. At the next CAC meeting, the group will be presented with detailed analysis of the future traffic volumes and pattern as well as various concepts with impacts identified. Following this CAC meeting, a PIM will be scheduled to present these concepts to the public discussion and comments.*

** All dates are tentative and subject to change per GDOT schedule.*

⇒CAC Action Items

1. Review and Correction of draft CAC minutes – comments and corrections due to Brandi Alvarez by **Wednesday, July 31, 2002.**
2. Submit Frequently Asked Question list to Brandi Alvarez by Friday, July 19, 2002. **Revised CAC minutes and any additional information will be mailed out in the CAC packets August 5, 2002.**